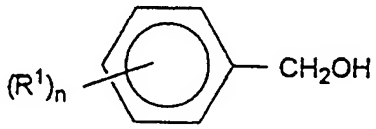
Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) ~~Process~~ A process for the preparation of an ω-benzyl ester of an amino dicarboxylic acid, ~~characterized in that~~ comprising reacting the amino dicarboxylic acid ~~is reacted~~ with a benzyl alcohol derivative of the formula ~~(I)~~



(I)

~~in which~~ wherein the R^1(s) ~~substituent or substituents, which are identical or different, represent a~~ are individually selected from the group consisting of hydrogen ~~atom~~, ~~a~~ C_1 to C_4 alkyl ~~group~~, ~~a~~ C_1 to C_4 alkoxy ~~group or a~~ and halogen ~~atom~~ and n is ~~equal to~~ 1, 2 or 3, in the presence of at least one mol per mole of the amino dicarboxylic acid of an ~~alkanesulphonic~~ alkanesulfonic acid, optionally in the presence of a solvent.

Claim 2 (currently amended) ~~Process according to~~ The process of Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the amino ~~diacid~~ dicarboxylic acid is an α-amino carboxylic acid carrying another carboxyl group attached to a carbon other than that in the α position.

Claim 3 (currently amended) ~~Process according to~~ The process of Claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the amino ~~diacid~~ dicarboxylic acid is glutamic acid or aspartic acid.

Claim 4 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the alcohol of formula (I) is benzyl alcohol.

Claim 5 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the temperature of the reaction is less than or equal to 80°C.

Claim 6 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the benzyl alcohol or its derivative of formula (I) is used in an amount ~~chosen within the range from~~ of 1.2 to 3 mol per mole of the amino ~~diacid~~ dicarboxylic acid.

Claim 7 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the ~~alkanesulphonic~~ alkanesulfonic acid is ~~methanesulphonic~~ methanesulfonic acid.

Claim 8 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the amount of ~~alkanesulphonic~~ alkanesulfonic acid used is ~~chosen within the range from~~ 1.01 to 2 mol per mole of the amino ~~diacid~~ dicarboxylic acid.

Claim 9 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the solvent of the reaction is ~~chosen~~ selected from the group consisting of aliphatic ~~or~~ and aromatic and halogenated ~~or~~ and nonhalogenated hydrocarbons.

Claim 10 (currently amended) ~~Process according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the ω-benzyl ester of the amino ~~diacid~~ dicarboxylic acid is obtained in the free form by bringing the ~~alkanesulphonate~~ alkanesulfonate of the ω-benzyl ester of the amino ~~diacid obtained~~ dicarboxylic acid into contact with an organic or inorganic base.

Claim 11 (currently amended) ~~Process according to~~ The process of Claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the base is used in an amount sufficient to reach the isoelectric point of the ester to be obtained.

Claim 12 (currently amended) ~~Process according to Claim 10 or 11, characterized in that~~ The process of Claim 10 wherein the base is an aqueous ammonia solution.

Claim 13 (currently amended) ~~Process according to one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the alkanesulphonate~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the alkanesulfonate of the ω-benzyl ester of the amino ~~diacid~~ dicarboxylic acid is crystallized before being converted to the free ω-benzyl ester of the amino ~~diacid~~ dicarboxylic acid.

Claim 14 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the solvent/water azeotrope is distilled off at a temperature of less than 80°C.

Claim 15 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the alkanesulphonate~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the alkanesulfonate of the ω-benzyl ester of the amino ~~diacid~~ dicarboxylic acid is isolated before being brought into contact with the base.

Claim 16 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of Claims 1 to 14, characterized in that the alkanesulphonate~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the alkanesulfonate of the ω-benzyl ester of the amino ~~diacid~~ dicarboxylic acid is not isolated from the medium before this ester is released.

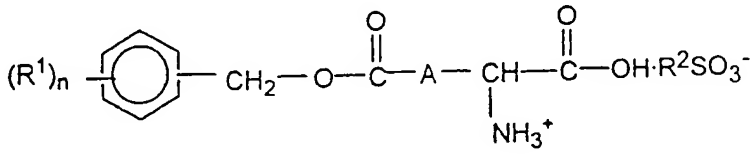
Claim 17 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the alkanesulphonate~~ The process of claim 1 wherein the alkanesulfonate of the ω-benzyl ester to be converted to the free ester is dissolved ~~with~~ in water.

Claim 18 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ The process of claim 1 wherein a solvent for the benzyl alcohol derivative is added to the medium comprising the ester to be released.

Claim 19 (currently amended) ~~Process according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ The process of claim 1 wherein, after having reached the pH of the isoelectric point, the medium is heated.

Claim 20 (currently amended) ~~Alkanesulphonate~~ Alkanesulfonate of ω-benzyl ester of an amino dicarboxylic acid.

Claim 21 (currently amended) ~~Alkanesulphonate according to~~ Alkanesulfonate of Claim 20, ~~characterized in that it is represented by~~ having the ~~following~~ formula ~~(II)~~:



II

~~in which~~ wherein the R^1(s) ~~substituent or substituents, which~~ are ~~identical or different, represent a~~ individually selected from the group consisting of hydrogen ~~atom~~, a C_1 to C_4 alkyl ~~group~~, a C_1 to C_4 alkoxy ~~group or a~~ and halogen ~~atom~~ and n is ~~equal to~~ 1, 2 or 3, A is the part of the molecule of an α-amino carboxylic acid attached to the carbon in the α position and to the carboxyl group in the ω position, and R^2 ~~represents the~~ is alkane residue of the ~~alkanesulphonic~~ alkanesulfonic acid.

Claim 22 (currently amended) ~~Alkanesulphonate according to the preceding claim, characterized in that~~ An alkanesulfonate of claim 21 wherein it is γ-benzyl glutamate ~~methanesulphonate~~ methanesulfonate or β-benzyl asparate methane-~~sulphonate~~ sulfonate.